

**ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 11****Nomadic Empires (The Mongols)**

History · Chapter 3 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

**HOW TO USE**

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

**MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER****Section A — Very Short Answer (1 mark each, 5 Qs)****Q1. What was the birth name of Chinggis Khan, and in which year did he take that title? [1 mark]****Ans:** His birth name was Temujin; he took the title Chinggis Khan at a quriltai in 1206.**Q2. What was a 'tumen' in the Mongol army? [1 mark]****Ans:** A tumen was the largest decimal unit of the army, numbering 10,000 men.**Q3. What was the 'yam'? [1 mark]****Ans:** The yam was the Mongol courier-relay system — stations along the roads stocked with fresh horses that let messengers carry orders quickly across the empire.**Q4. What was the 'Yasa'? [1 mark]****Ans:** The Yasa was the code of regulations and customary law associated with Chinggis Khan, governing the army, the hunt, discipline and conduct.**Q5. After Chinggis Khan's death, what name was given to the share of territory each of his sons received? [1 mark]****Ans:** An ulus (the patrimony or share of territory and people governed by each son).**Section B — Short Answer (3 marks each, 4 Qs)****Q6. Why did the steppe nomads depend on settled societies, and how did this shape their relations with them? [3 marks]****Ans:** The pastoral nomads' herds gave them meat, milk, hides and wool, but they could not grow GRAIN or make METAL tools, weapons, fine cloth and luxuries. For these they depended on neighbouring farming and city societies. So the relationship was one of INTERDEPENDENCE that swung between exchange and force: when relations were good the nomads TRADED their animals and animal products for grain and manufactured goods; when trade was blocked or insufficient, they RAIDED settled lands to obtain them. This constant need for the produce of settled societies is one reason the mobile, hard-riding nomads pressed against — and eventually conquered — their settled neighbours.**Q7. How did the Mongols administer their vast empire? Explain briefly. [3 marks]****Ans:** The Mongols held their huge empire together with several tools. First, the YAM, a courier-relay system of stations stocked with fresh horses, let messengers carry orders and news rapidly across thousands of kilometres, tying the provinces to the centre. Second, the YASA, the code of regulations and customary law associated with Chinggis Khan, gave the many peoples a shared body of law and bound them to the Khan's authority. Third, because the Mongols had little tradition of writing or bureaucracy of their own, they pragmatically used literate UIGHURS and the administrative skills of conquered Persians and Chinese to keep records and collect taxes. They also made the SILK ROUTE safe and were religiously TOLERANT — so the empire was held by communication, law, borrowed expertise and trade, not by force alone.

**Q8. Were the Mongols only destroyers? Give a balanced answer. [3 marks]**

**Ans:** No — that is only half the picture. The Mongol conquests were undeniably BRUTAL: cities of the Khwarazm empire and of northern China were sacked with terrible loss of life. But the Mongols also BUILT and INTEGRATED. They created an administration (the yam relay, the Yasa, Uighur and Persian scribes), unified a vast area under one authority, and ACTIVELY PROMOTED long-distance trade by making the Silk Route and other roads safe, so that merchants, craftsmen, technologies (such as printing and gunpowder) and artistic ideas moved across Eurasia. They were broadly TOLERANT of different religions. A balanced answer therefore records both the destruction of conquest AND the communication, trade and cultural exchange the Mongol peace fostered.

**Q9. Why are the sources for Mongol history difficult, and how has the image of Chinggis Khan changed over time? [3 marks]**

**Ans:** Most written sources on the Mongols come from OUTSIDERS — especially Persian chronicles such as those of Juwaini and Rashiduddin (Rashid al-Din) and Chinese records — frequently composed by the very peoples the Mongols had conquered, so they can be HOSTILE or exaggerated in describing Mongol violence; the Mongols' own 'Secret History of the Mongols' survives but is limited. Because every source carries a viewpoint, historians must read them CRITICALLY. As a result the IMAGE of Chinggis Khan has shifted: long remembered as a barbaric DESTROYER by the settled societies he ravaged, he is honoured in modern MONGOLIA as a revered NATIONAL FOUNDER and unifier — a vivid example of how interpretation depends on the sources and the historian's standpoint.

**Section C — Source-Based + Long Answer (5 + 8 = 13 marks)**

**Q10. Read the source and answer the sub-questions: 'When Temujin had at last mastered the warring tribes of the steppe, he did not leave them as he had found them. He broke up the old clans and divided their fighting men afresh into units of ten, a hundred and a thousand, and placed in each unit men drawn from different tribes, so that no man's first loyalty was any longer to his clan chief, but to his commander and to the Khan. In 1206 the assembled chiefs proclaimed him Chinggis Khan.' (a) What was Temujin's title from 1206? (b) Into what units did he divide his fighting men? (c) Why did he place men from DIFFERENT tribes in the same unit? (d) Name the assembly that proclaimed him in 1206. (e) What does this source tell us about the secret of Chinggis Khan's power? [5 marks]**

**Ans:** (a) Chinggis Khan. (b) Into decimal units of ten, a hundred and a thousand (the largest being the 10,000-strong tumen). (c) So that men's loyalty would be to their unit, its commander and the Khan, rather than to their old clan chief — this deliberately BROKE the tribal loyalties that had kept the steppe divided and weak. (d) The quriltai (the assembly of chiefs). (e) The source shows that the secret of Chinggis Khan's power lay not merely in conquest but in ORGANISATION — by destroying old tribal divisions and welding the Mongols into one disciplined army loyal to a single ruler, he created the unified force with which a nomadic people could build the largest land empire in history.

**Q11. How did Chinggis Khan organise his people into a fighting force, and why was this organisation so important? Explain. [8 marks]**

**Ans:** Chinggis Khan's greatest achievement was to turn a divided, feuding steppe into a single disciplined army. (1) THE PROBLEM: before him the clans and tribes of the steppe quarrelled endlessly, and a man's first loyalty was to his clan chief; such a fractured society could raid but never build a lasting empire. (2) UNIFICATION: born as TEMUJIN, he built alliances, defeated his rivals and united the tribes, and in 1206 was acclaimed CHINGGIS KHAN at a QURILTAI (assembly of chiefs). (3) THE DECIMAL SYSTEM: he reorganised the whole fighting population into DECIMAL units — tens, hundreds, thousands and the 10,000-strong TUMEN — in a clear chain of command running up to the Khan, so the army could be mustered, moved and controlled with ease. (4) BREAKING THE TRIBES: crucially, he MIXED men from different tribes within each unit, so that a soldier's loyalty shifted from his clan to his unit, its commander and the Khan; this deliberately DESTROYED the tribal divisions that had kept the steppe weak and welded the Mongols into one obedient people. (5) DISCIPLINE AND MOBILITY: the army was bound by harsh discipline and absolute obedience, commanders rose by MERIT and loyalty, and its core of mounted HORSE-ARCHERS was fast, far-ranging and superbly coordinated. (6) WHY IT MATTERED: this organisation — not mere numbers — let Chinggis Khan conquer the JIN of north China and destroy the KHWARAZM empire, building one of the largest empires in history, held together by the yam courier system and the Yasa. The deepest point is that his genius lay in REPLACING tribal loyalty with loyalty to the state, the foundation on which the whole Mongol empire stood.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 8-mark question: 'How did Chinggis Khan organise his army and his people into a fighting force?' OR 'Explain the military organisation of the Mongols under Chinggis Khan.'**

Almost every term paper — the single most common long answer

<b>Step 1</b> [2 marks]	<b>The starting problem — a divided steppe</b>	Open with the PROBLEM Chinggis Khan faced: the steppe was split into many quarrelling clans and tribes whose feuds kept the Mongols weak. After uniting them and being acclaimed Chinggis Khan at the quriltai of 1206, his great achievement was to turn this fractured society into a single disciplined army. State clearly that his reforms were aimed at destroying old tribal loyalties.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>The decimal system — 10, 100, 1,000 and the tumen</b>	Describe the structure: Chinggis Khan reorganised the whole fighting population into DECIMAL units — tens, hundreds, thousands and the 10,000-strong TUMEN. Crucially, he MIXED men from different tribes within each unit so that their loyalty was to the unit, its commander and the Khan, NOT to their old clan chief. This deliberately broke the tribal divisions that had weakened the steppe and created a unified chain of command.
<b>Step 3</b> [2 marks]	<b>Discipline, mobility and the horse</b>	Explain why this army was so effective: every able-bodied man was a soldier; the Mongols were superb horse-archers, mobile and able to cover huge distances; discipline was harsh and obedience absolute. Commanders were promoted on merit and loyalty. The army could be moved, divided and concentrated at the Khan's word, giving the Mongols speed and coordination their enemies could not match.
<b>Step 4</b> [2 marks]	<b>From army to empire — the result</b>	Conclude with the consequence: this organisation let Chinggis Khan launch the campaigns against the Jin of north China and the destruction of the Khwarazm empire, building one of history's largest land empires. The decimal army was held together by the yam courier system and the Yasa (Chinggis Khan's code). End by noting that the genius lay not just in conquest but in REPLACING tribal loyalty with loyalty to the state — the foundation on which the empire stood.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Saying he kept the tribes together instead of explaining that he BROKE them up and mixed men across the decimal units — the central conceptual error.
- Not naming the decimal units and the tumen (10,000) specifically — vague phrasing loses precision marks.
- Forgetting WHY the reform mattered (loyalty to the Khan, not the clan), so the answer is a list of numbers with no point.
- No concluding line linking the army to the empire (China, Khwarazm) and to the yam/Yasa.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 4-mark question: 'How did the Mongols administer their vast empire?' OR 'Explain the yam and the Yasa.'**

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<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>The yam — the courier relay</b>	State the communication system: the Mongols ran the YAM, a network of relay stations placed at intervals along the roads, each kept stocked with fresh horses and supplies. A royal messenger could gallop from station to station, changing horses, and so carry orders and news with remarkable speed across the enormous empire. The yam tied the distant provinces to the centre.
<b>Step 2</b> [1 mark]	<b>The Yasa — the code</b>	Explain the law: the empire was governed by the YASA, the code of regulations and customary law associated with Chinggis Khan. It laid down rules for the army, the hunt, discipline and conduct, and gave the Mongols a shared body of law that bound the different peoples of the empire to the authority of the Khan.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Scribes and borrowed expertise</b>	Add the administrative manpower: the Mongols, lacking a writing tradition of their own at first, used literate UIGHURS and the skills of conquered settled peoples — Persians, Chinese and others — to keep records, collect taxes and run the bureaucracy. They were pragmatic, borrowing whatever expertise made the empire work.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Trade and tolerance</b>	Conclude with policy: the Mongols made the SILK ROUTE and the roads SAFE, actively encouraging long-distance trade and the movement of merchants, craftsmen and ideas. They were broadly TOLERANT of different religions. Thus the empire was held together not only by force but by communication, law, borrowed administration, trade and tolerance.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Describing only conquest and missing the administrative tools (yam, Yasa, Uighur scribes).
- Confusing the yam (courier relay) with the Yasa (the code) — keep the two clearly distinct.
- Listing features with no line on trade/tolerance and how these held the empire together.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark source/extract-based question: a short passage on nomad-sedentary relations, a Mongol campaign, the yam or the Yasa, followed by 3 sub-questions.**

Annual in the source-based section

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Read twice; underline named terms and the key claim</b>	On first read, underline every proper noun and key term in the passage (e.g. 'Chinggis Khan', 'quriltai', 'tumen', 'yam', 'Khwarazm', '1206'). The sub-questions are almost always answered from these underlined anchors plus one line of your own chapter knowledge. Do not start writing yet.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Answer 'identify / state' sub-questions tightly, then 'explain'</b>	For an 'identify/name' sub-question, answer in one line straight from the text. For an 'explain' sub-question, add ONE line of chapter knowledge to the passage's fact — e.g. the passage describes men placed in units of a thousand; you add that this decimal organisation deliberately broke old tribal loyalty. Match the length of each answer to its marks.
<b>Step 3</b> [2 marks]	<b>The evaluate / 'in your view' sub-question</b>	The last sub-question usually asks for reasoning ('Why was this important?' / 'What does this tell us about Mongol rule?'). Give a judgement supported by a chapter fact — e.g. 'This shows that the Mongols ruled not by force alone but by organisation: the decimal army and the yam relay let a nomadic people hold the largest land empire in history together.'

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Copying the whole passage instead of answering the specific sub-question asked.
- Ignoring the marks in brackets — writing a paragraph for a 1-mark 'identify' and one line for a 2-mark 'explain'.
- Skipping the evaluate sub-question or answering it with opinion alone, unsupported by a chapter fact.

**MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES**

- In History the correct name or term (Temujin, Chinggis Khan, quriltai, tumen, yam, Yasa, Khwarazm, ulus) is itself worth marks; vague phrasing ('a Mongol king', 'a kind of army') is not rewarded.
- The 8-mark army answer must cover the PROBLEM (divided steppe), UNIFICATION (Temujin → Chinggis Khan, 1206), the DECIMAL units, the MIXING of tribes to break clan loyalty, and the RESULT (conquest, empire); missing the 'mixing to break tribal loyalty' point caps the score.
- For source-based sub-questions, award marks for answers drawn from BOTH the passage and chapter knowledge; pure copying of the passage without the asked-for point gets half marks.
- A common conceptual error to penalise: treating 'Genghis Khan' as a birth name rather than a title taken in 1206; and seeing the Mongols ONLY as destroyers, ignoring the yam, the Yasa, trade and tolerance.
- Distinguishing the yam (courier relay) from the Yasa (the code), and the tumen (10,000) from the smaller decimal units, is required for full marks where relevant.